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1. Episode Title: Episode 45 – Bhagavad Gita (Chapter 2, Episode 45)

2. Topics & Tags:

TOPICS: The importance of following the guidance of Elders for personal growth, Understanding the nature of the soul and body, The role of logic and reasoning in spiritual knowledge, The significance of knowledge as wealth, Protecting knowledge from ignorance and theft

TAGS: HH Chinna Jeeyar Swami, Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 2, Arjuna, Krishna, dharma, a:thma (soul), de:ha (body), prama:nas (means of knowledge), tharkam (reasoning), jna:na sampada (wealth of knowledge), tharka sa:sthra (science of logic), vya:karanam (syntax)

3. Main Content:

Jai Srimannarayana! Priya Bhagavadbandhus (Dear devotees of the Lord), to become a better person, it is always beneficial to walk in the path of Elders (scripturally knowledgeable). Why? We refer to Elders as those who discuss a topic in depth. Shape, age, wealth, etc. do not necessarily define an Elder. Those who have provided a worthy conclusion on a topic are called Elders. If we want to attain knowledge on a topic, it is beneficial to accept the path of such Elders.

Why? Under their guidance, our intellect will not act uncontrollably. Their conclusions (on a topic) act as guide ridges to let your intellect flow properly in the appropriate direction towards the goal. If we step into ‘new topic’ waters by ourselves, we don’t know if it would be muddy, or have whirlpools or dangerous animals! Therefore, taking the support of the conclusions from the Wise, Elders, we can safely do our job there and emerge successfully. That’s why, Sri Krishna Himself accepted it as a good practice.

We all must adhere to the vicha:ra dha:ra (thought trail) of Elders. That’s why you don’t have to accept thaththvam (truth) just because I am saying it. Whatever Elders have decided, we must take the same as the base and step ahead in life. Sri Krishna clarifies this in Bhagavad Gita Chapter 2, verse 16 and 17. He explains a:thma thaththva (nature of soul) and de:ha thaththva (nature of body).

Ideally, when learning about these, prama:nas (means of knowledge of eternal truths) explain some aspects. Some aspects are visibly clear while some conclusions can be derived through proper thought. Also, we must make the content declared in sa:sthra (scriptures) or by Elders as the object for the independent intellect that God has given us. We must also carefully recognize it, then decide to move ahead. Since you also have an intellect that can think logically, you can also utilize it and inspect. He says this in the 17th verse. He is demonstrating certain logical methods. He is showcasing reasons.

Let’s look at the 17th verse.

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SLOKA WORD -

avina:si thu thad viddhi ye:na sarvam idam thatham|

vina:sam avyayasya:sya na kaschith karthum arhathi||

SLOKA MEANING -

Understand that which is indestructible; nothing can destroy the eternal essence of all beings.

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Think about this yourself. No one can destroy you, the a:thma (soul). I explained to you earlier about de:ha thaththva (nature of body) and a:thma thaththva (nature of soul) in the previous verse [16th]. No one can stop the body from changing forms, and no one can bring any change to the soul. He shows the same with an example and reasoning.

How? avina:si (indestructible): He is making an assertion. tath avina:si (the soul is undestroyable). Why? ye:na sarvam idam thatham (because it pervades everything). He is using a statement to explain this. Thatham vya:ptham means to pervade. Sarvam means everywhere. sarva thatham (that which permeates everywhere). To pervade is to be able to permeate in everything. There is no limitation on the scope of ‘everything’. It can pervade everything, including what you know in this world to be the most minute.

He said, it can permeate there too, i.e. sarva thathamu. sarvatha thathva:th (because it can pervade everything)… realize it to be avina:si (undestroyable). avina:sithu thad viddhi (thus, understand the nature of the soul). vina:sam avyayasya asya na kaschith karthum arhathi (in the aspect of the soul, no one can cause any destruction). Not only you or they, I also cannot do it. He did not exclude anyone in this. I am the all-knowing, all-powerful, I am God. However, I will do only the yukthamu (right thing). I will also not do what is ayukthamu (unfit).

Therefore, since no one can destroy a:thma (soul) - who you think of as Bhi:shma, is the soul and cannot be destroyed. Avina:si: Hence, the souls, Bhi:shma and Dro:na, are also avina:si (undestroyable souls). So, why cry over that? What is the need to grieve when there is nothing that anyone can do? Sri Krishna is clarifying to Arjuna that you need not feel sorrowful for having to wage war. This is called tharkam (reasoning).

Prathijna (assertion), he:thuvu (reason), uda:harana (example) are all given and then it is proved. There is a major philosophical vision following this process. Swami is explaining it such that they also understand it. What is He saying? Avina:sithu… He did not say ‘e:thath’, He said ‘thath’. ‘Thath’ denotes something far away. ‘Idam’ denotes something close by. Visible entities are referred to as ‘idam’. Invisible entities are referred to as ‘thath’. A:thma (soul) is referred to as ‘thath’. Hence, it is not visible - meaning it is ‘far away’.

Ideally, veda:nthis (followers of Upanishads) and tha:rkikas (logicians) belong to two darsanas (philosophical visions). Tharkam and vya:karanam (syntax) are also two paths. It is said that knowledge of these two is essential for everyone.

ka:na:dam pa:nini:yam cha sarva sa:sthra ka:rakam (the science of logic and syntax are essential to everyone). Words must be clear, meaningful, and appropriate. Who would refute this? No matter what subject you want to study, these two are essential to move forward and make conclusions.

Ve:da:nthis also need these two. They make conclusions. These two [science of logic and syntax] protect them in a way that those conclusions are not flawed. The experts of grammar and the experts of logic ensure that those conclusions are set in the right path. Therefore, these two are essential to everyone. The conclusions thus reached are the wealth of knowledge, jna:na sampada (wealth of knowledge)! Knowledge is wealth. In fact, it is the prime wealth for a man. We must enhance this wealth.

As this wealth grows, some get jealous and some look for opportunities to steal it. If we want to be protected from these ‘thieves’, there must be guards on either side. The scientists of grammar and logic protect the growing wealth of knowledge from being stolen on both sides. Therefore, we need both. If we look at Ve:da:ntham (the Vedas) as a big fruit garden that yields conclusions on all objects … and there are quite a few of those ‘fruits’ in the garden… people will want to steal them as they explore the garden, climbing onto the trees etc.

If we want to protect those ‘fruits’, what do we need? We need a strong fence. Tharka sa:sthra (the science of logic and reasoning) is like a great fence. The stronger it is, the safer the wealth of knowledge. In this verse, He says…

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SLOKA WORD -

a:thma, i.e. thath avina:si kuthaha sarvatha thathva:th

SLOKA MEANING -

The soul is indestructible; it pervades everything.

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He is making a beautiful elaboration through this verse. He says, because it is all pervasive… but how does it pervade everywhere? What is it that pervades everywhere? Air pervades everywhere. How do we declare that? It enters a room, it enters a stick, it enters a body. It has a quality of sowkshmyatha (permeability) that enables it to enter everything. A:ka:sa (space) enters and resides at places where air cannot enter. Hence, it implies that space is more subtle than it. A:thma (soul) is ‘thinner’ than it as well. There is nothing more subtle than a:thma.

Such a quality of an object is termed parama:rtham (ultimate reality). To refer to the objects, it is called aparama:tham (relative reality). Aparama:rtham means that which is subject to transformations. Parama:rtham is that which is not subject to any transformation. Parama:rtham does not mean eternal entity. Aparama:rtham does not mean illusionary, portraying something to be real when it isn’t. Parama:rthamu is that which does not change. There is nothing that can pervade an a:thma. If anything can enter another, it implies that the host object is a combination of some entities.

The entering object will have to make way by splitting the host object’s constituent material. If we use an axe to hit a log, the axe enters the log breaking the log matter into parts. The parts that were once together are now separated into two after the axe enters it. What this implies is that a host object can always be transformed [like the log]. That which is entering it is relatively stable [like the axe]. A:thma can enter everything. Because what is visible are all systems made of organs. It is made of some minute and some large parts.

If we look at this cloth, it is made of threads. If we pierce a needle in the cloth, it enters between the threads. The threads then separate. Thus, the needle enters the cloth. Only if something is made of certain other objects, then something thinner, more subtle, can enter it. That host object becomes transformed. The entering object has a relatively longer life. A:thma can enter everything but there is no object that can enter it. We must remember this. How? If we must know this, we must first know the quality of physical elements - earth, air, fire, [water], space. Let’s learn about this next time. Jai Srimannarayana!

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